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are usually given with the investigations themselves, and are therefore scattered about in different journals and isolated publications; hence arises the necessity for some sort of repertory in which the stray accounts and straggling items may be gathered and summarized. The department of microscopy will make this work its special concern. The necessity for immediate information makes it impossible to avoid a more or less chaotic presentation of subjects, and reviews of progress in special directions will therefore be in order from time to time.

There is another feature of the work proposed in this department to which we wish to invite particular attention. Experience has shown that each different object requires a special mode of treatment, and that the same object must be treated differently according to the nature of the problem in hand. For example, the course of preparation which has given satisfactory results in the study of the development of the ova of a certain species, may prove quite inadequate when applied to a different though closely allied species. And it has been found that different stages in the development of the same ovum often require different modes of preservation. The investigator cannot, therefore, blindly adopt the methods employed by others, but must, in by far the greater number of cases, determine by experiment the method to be pursued. But such experiments demand a general knowledge of methods, and, above all, a knowledge of the special applications of methods in cognate subjects. It is in the adaptation of methods to special subjects that the skill of the investigator is shown. Our information of the methods employed in specific cases should be as extended as possible. To meet this need entire courses of methods that have led to successful results in typical cases will continue to find a place in this department.

Such then are the aims of "microscopy." If those who take an active interest in the cultivation of microscopical methods desire to further these aims, they can do so, and at the same time confer a favor, by communicating to the editor any information respecting methods which they have found useful, or by sending published accounts of important methods for review in these pages.

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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— The winter session of the Teachers' School of Science connected with the Boston Society of Natural History commenced in October with a lecture on sponges, by Professor Alpheus Hyatt, who will conduct a course of ten lessons upon the structure of animals. The plan pursued by Professor Hyatt has special reference to the teaching of methods of observation. On Jan. 3d will be commenced a supplementary course of ten practical laboratory

lessons in elementary mineralogy, to be given in the laboratory of the institute by Professor W. O. Crosby and Mrs. Ellen H. Richards. The class is limited to fifty teachers, one to be nominated by each of the masters of the Boston grammar schools.

— The Biological School of the University of Pennsylvania was opened on Nov. 3d. Professor Harrison Allen delivered the opening address. He outlined the objects of the school in a masterly manner, pointing out that original research is its leading aim. It is to be hoped that Professor Allen's views as to its conduct will be carried into effect, otherwise it will become a school of instruction only, and as such an unnecessary addition to the general university course. In order to do this its chairs must be filled by original investigators.

— *Limulus polyphemus*, the horse-shoe or horse-foot crab, as it is called in New Jersey, in whose flat sandy bogs it lives in immense numbers, is becoming useful as food for fishes. Enormous numbers are fed to eels, which greedily devour them. In one pond they were said to consume seven hundred and fifty horse-feet in three days. It would seem impossible to furnish so many, but the number does not begin to detail the extent of the catch. Millions of them are annually fed to swine and poultry, and some men make a business of catching them. On June 15, after a storm, Captain Downs, with a trap of his own invention, caught one thousand "feet," and between the 15th of July and April his aggregate catch was nineteen thousand.

— The St. Louis Academy of Science and the Missouri Historical Society according to the *Kansas City Review of Science*, have finally gained the property which has been so long in litigation and will probably at once erect a building suitable for the purposes of both bodies. The property was given by the late James H. Lucas, a number of years ago, but the delivery was refused by his heirs on account of delay in complying with the terms of the grantor.

— James Macfarlane, Towanda, Pa., is preparing a second and much improved edition of his *Geological Railway Guide*, and wishes persons who have used the book to send him corrections and additions. If it will be a saving of labor, they may send him their copies of the book containing such notes by mail, which he will return refunding the postage.

— The French Association met at Blois, as announced on the 3d inst. One of the most interesting subjects of the sitting was the examination of the Thenay geological strata, where Abbé Bourgeois thinks he has discovered Tertiary man. The principal French geologists arrived in Blois for the excursions, but there were very few foreigners.

— Among the faculty of Bryn Mawr College for ladies, to be opened next year near Philadelphia, we notice the name of

Dr. Edmund B. Wilson, late lecturer on biology in Williams College and author of zoölogical essays of sterling value. The standard of science-teaching in our American colleges is steadily rising.

— The *Naturæ Novitates*, published during the last six years every fortnight by R. Friedländer & Sohn, at Berlin, is sold for a dollar a year, and proves a useful bibliographic list of current literature of all nations on natural history and the exact sciences, with brief news items, which we find of occasional use.

— The meeting of the German naturalists and physicians was opened September 18, at Magdeburg; over a thousand members were present. The association will meet next year at Strasburg, with Professors Kussmaul and De Bary as secretaries.

— Professor Dr. Arnold Foerster, the well known hymenopterist, died at Aachen, Aug. 13. He was a school-teacher, and we well remember his courteous greeting when we called on him twelve years ago.

— Alfred E. Brehm, the author of *Illustriertes Thierleben*, and well known as a traveler, died in November last; he was born in 1829. Dr. L. Fitzinger, the well-known zoölogist of Vienna, died Sept. 22.

— We regret to notice that *Science Record*, of which two volumes have appeared, published by S. E. Cassino & Co., and edited by Mr. J. S. Kingsley, ceased to exist with the December number.

— The next meeting of the Society of Naturalists, E. U. S., was to be held at Washington, D. C., during the week following Christmas, 1884.

— The late Sir Erasmus Wilson's munificent bequest to the Royal College of Surgeons is expected to reach the sum of £200,000.

— On July 25, 1884, died in London George B. Sowerby, known as a conchologist and palæontologist. He continued the *Thesaurus Conchyliorum* begun by his father.

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PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, Nov. 29, 1884.—The following communications were presented: Mr. Sanderson Smith on the recent deep-sea explorations of the United States Fish Commission, with special reference to geological results; Mr. Leonard Stejneger exhibited specimens illustrating the shedding of the bill in auks; Dr. George Vasey on the grasses of the arid plains; Mr. Charles D. Walcott on the oldest known fauna on the American continent; Professor Lester F. Ward on the occurrence of the seventeen-year locust in Virginia in October, 1884.